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21 May 1971

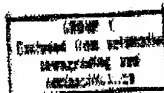
MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Control Division**SUBJECT:** Administrative Control of Official Personnel Files**REFERENCE:** A) HR [REDACTED]

B) HHR [REDACTED]

1. The recent recommendation by the Inspector General that there should be a positive and continuous control of all Official Personnel Files has required a review of Transactions & Records Branch (TRB) file control procedures.

2. A cursory review of file control procedures in the Agency is as follows. A current roster of individuals authorized to charge out personnel files is kept in the Files Section of TRB. These records include not only data on the individual, but also the type of files he will be allowed to see. When one of these individuals wishes to charge out a file, a charge-out is placed in the space vacated by the file and the file is given to him or sent to him. If the file is to be forwarded to an area outside of his control, approval must be obtained from the Head of the individual's Career Service and if it is to be forwarded between operating offices, TRB must be notified by a Certified Transfer Report. Files are loaned out for a ten day period after which an extension must be obtained from TRB. This system currently handles an average of approximately 1,700 file charges per week.

3. As a first step in examining file control procedures TRB surveyed the personnel file control systems used by NSA, AID, USIA and State Department in an attempt to identify any useful procedures for Agency adoption. AID has a centralized personnel file system, but they do not have a list of persons authorized to charge out files. The supervisor of their files section says that he gets to know who they are. They have have done away with any need for a receipting system by refusing to send out any files. All files must be picked up in person. Files may be charged out for five days on the basis of a charge card filled out by the individual. Their volume is about 1,250 per week and they do not have any scheduled inventory.

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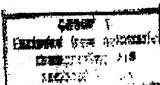
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4. The State Department has a centralized files system. They maintain a current list of individuals authorized to charge out files as well as a list of individuals authorized to carry personnel files as couriers. An authorized individual may have a file for 30 days after filling out a charge request which is filed in the space vacated by the file. The State Department had a receipting system in effect for files that were sent out until about four years ago, when it was abandoned because they could not afford the extensive time and effort to maintain it. They also used to have a periodic inventory as a back up for their charge system, but they have not had one for some time now.

5. The United States Information Agency does not have a centralized files system. There are separate sections for foreign service and the various domestic media. The foreign service section does maintain a list of individuals authorized to pull personnel files and it is kept current. When an individual wants a file, a charge card is filled out and placed in the space vacated by the file. When a file is sent to a requester, a classified receipt is filled out and returned to the Files Section. These receipts are placed in a box according to the month of the charge, but it is unclear how valuable these receipts really are in that there is no stipulated time limit on how long a file may be charged out, and follow up activity on files that have been out "too long" is based on the charge outs. The file clerks spot check charge outs as they file material and follow up on those that seem too old. USIA does not have any periodic inventory of their files and their activity runs about 500 charges per week.

6. The National Security Agency seem to have the tightest controls on personnel files, but they also have the lowest volume. They maintain a current list of persons authorized to charge out personnel files. When one of these individuals wants a file, he fills out a two part charge form. These charge forms are maintained in a bin until the file is returned. When a file is sent to an individual, the second copy of the charge form is sent with the file and is signed off by the recipient and returned to the Files Section where it is matched up with the original charge form. Files that must be forwarded out of the building are sent by their courier system in metal containers and the numbers of the container that holds the file is noted on the charge form. In this manner, if there is a mishap enroute, they can identify which personnel files were missing. They have no stipulated time limit for file charge, but their volume of charge outs runs only about 110 per week.

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7. An examination of the problems encountered in the Agency personnel file control system do not seem to bear out the Inspector General Survey comments as interpreted in TRB. If unlocated files are to be defined as files that are missing or not accounted for, then it is indeed unusual for them to remain unlocated for weeks or months at a time. In the past ten years, perhaps eight cases of this nature occurred which required the creation of duplicate files. In all of these cases, the component acknowledged the receipt of the files, but could not locate the files within its own components. In all of the above cases, the Official Personnel Files have been recovered eventually within the component originally charged with the file.

8. The problems encountered by TRB have not been with files that are missing because components deny having received the files, but rather delays in receiving files back from components or in tracking them through the internal logging procedure as they are forwarded within the components. In all, this delay in obtaining files results in a later effective date on perhaps two actions per pay period. These, of course, would be reassignment actions and not money actions. Any delays in receiving files that might possibly effect the effective date of money actions are brought to the Chief or Deputy Chief of TRB and resolved in time to adhere to the original effective date.

9. In summary, the Agency system seems to stack up fairly well against those used in other Agencies for controlling the Personnel files. The possible exception of NSA is modified by their very low volume of activity. They handle 110 file charges per week to our 1,727. A receipting system would seem to require a good deal of effort to maintain with very little benefit because our file control problems do not reside in a component's denial of receiving a file, but in its loss within the component's own confines. It is this last point that seems to point to a better solution to file control, a some sort of computerized file charge delinquent system monitored by TRB. A proposal outlining such a possible system will be forwarded by TRB in the near future.

Chief, Transactions & Records Branch

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